

# Montana Protocol for Crisis Response

## Office of Public Instruction (OPI) 2009-2010

For the purposes of this response protocol, a **Crisis** is defined as: a sudden, unanticipated event that profoundly affects a significant segment of the school population and often involves serious injury or death or threatened injury or death. **Crisis Incidents** at school may include natural disasters, fires, the use of weapons or explosives, or the death of a student, staff member or someone in a student's immediate family. School superintendents or their designated responsible official may determine when a "crisis incident" has occurred. **Protocol** means: the methods the OPI will use in responding to a school-related crisis.

NOTE: It is not the intent of this protocol for the OPI to assume jurisdiction during any crisis situation, nor is it the intent to develop "disaster or crisis" plans for the state. It is the intent of this protocol to assist local schools in returning students to classes in an efficient and effective manner, and to provide the services and technical assistance to schools that we are requested to provide and are capable of providing. Further, the intent of this protocol is to utilize OPI resources to deal with the situation after the crisis has occurred and has been brought under control.

### ***OPI Protocol for Response to a School Crisis***

The OPI will assign a "Crisis Management Team" (CMT) that will include persons designated to:

- provide information to the media,
- work with the school,
- refer the LEA request for assistance checklist to appropriate OPI staff, and
- Coordinate with the appropriate OPI management.

1. Membership on the Crisis Management Team for the 2007-08 school years:

- Deputy Superintendent Dennis Parman (CMT Manager) [(direct office) 444-7325 (assistant) 444-5643, (office cell) 431-5644, or (personal cell) 945-2278].
- Assistant Superintendent, Nancy Coopersmith [(direct office) 444-5541 or (personal cell) 439- 3016]
- Communications Director, Communication Director (CMT Media Liaison) [(direct office) 444-#### or (c) ### ####]
- Chief Legal Counsel, Ann Gilkey (444-4402)
- Chief of Staff, Madalyn Quinlan [(direct office) 444-3168, (office cell) 431-5643, (personal cell) 459-2481]
- Administrator, Special Education, Timothy Harris [(direct office) 444-4429 or (office cell) 461-7181]
- Human Resource Manager, Tom Antonick [(direct office) 444-3161]

2. Steps in dealing with a crisis:

- A. Initial Report of Crisis Event -- When an OPI staff person receives word of an LEA crisis, the staff person is to report this information to (start with first person and report to the first available person): (1) Dennis Parman, Deputy Superintendent, (2) Madalyn Quinlan, Chief of Staff, (3) Ann Gilkey, Chief Legal Counsel, or (4) Tom Antonick, Human Resource Manager. One of these four will call the Crisis Management Team (CMT) together.

- B. Media -- The initial spokesperson to the Media Liaison will be the Communications Director. As the CMT Media Liaison, this person will determine who, if anyone other than the Liaison will communicate with the media and what content/information will be shared with the media. If appropriate to the circumstance, the CMT Media Liaison will refer to the attached "Fact Sheet" on school-related violence among youth. The fact sheet will be updated annually. (Madalyn Quinlan serves as backup)
- C. Team Management -- The initial CMT Manager will be the Dennis Parman. The CMT Manager will contact the district to verify the incident and determine the facts with a credible/authoritative source. This information will be reported back to all team members. The Deputy will also ask the LEA superintendent or designated representative whether or not OPI assistance is needed. If possible, this should be done within 24 hours of an incident or of the time OPI is notified.
- If OPI's assistance **is not** needed, the CMT Manager will monitor the situation. CMT Members, staff and other LEAs are informed as necessary. If OPI's assistance **is** requested, the CMT Manager will fax the request for assistance form to the district. This form will identify the type of assistance requested by the LEA. Once the form is returned, the CMT Manager will secure the appropriate OPI personnel to assist in the response. (Nancy Coopersmith serves as backup)
- D. Informing OPI Staff -- The Media Liaison will inform OPI staff concerning the crisis, manage misinformation, and provide updates as required. (Madalyn Quinlan serves as backup)
- E. Information to Other LEAs -- The Media Liaison will keep other Montana LEAs informed regarding events, known facts of the situation and manage misinformation via the Official OPI Email system and whatever other communications outlets deemed necessary. The Media Liaison will be the contact point for incoming calls about the crisis incident from other schools as well as from the media. The Media Liaison will also notify SAM, MTSBA and the MBPE. (Madalyn Quinlan serves as backup)
- F. Follow-up Meetings of the CMT --The Crisis Management Team will meet as necessary following the crisis. The need for these meetings will be determined by the CMT Manager. (Nancy Coopersmith serves as backup)
- G. Follow-up Communication with the Affected LEA -- The CMT Manager will follow-up with the LEA as necessary during and following the crisis. (Nancy Coopersmith serves as backup)

***Crisis Response: LEA Checklist for Requested Assistance***

	Check if help is requested
1. Legal information	
2. Pupil transportation information	
3. School foods/commodities information	
4. Fiscal/accounting information	
5. Personnel issues	
6. Assistance in dealing with the media	
7. Accreditation information	
8. Request assistance in getting help from:	
a. child and family services	
b. victims assistance (National Org. for Victims Assistance)	
c. counselors (for students, staff, parents)	
d. health services	
e. law enforcement services	
f. mental health services/resources	
g. instructional materials or equipment	
h. classroom facilities (alternative sites for classes)	
i. other referral help (please be specific):	
9. Other assistance requested from OPI (specific):	
10. Other assistance requested from OPI (specific):	

Assistance Requested by: (print name) \_\_\_\_\_

Position/Title: (print) \_\_\_\_\_

Signature: \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_

Telephone: \_\_\_\_\_ Fax: \_\_\_\_\_

E-mail: \_\_\_\_\_

***Please fax to Dennis Parman: (406) 444-3924 or (406) 444-1373***

**Violence-Related Behaviors Among High School-Aged Youth  
National and Montana Comparisons**

*Sources: 2005 U.S. and 2001, 2003, 2005 and 2007 Montana Youth Risk Behavior Surveys (OPI)  
Montana Gun-Free Schools Reports for School Years 2002-03, 2003-04, 2004-05, 2005-06 and  
2006-07 (OPI)*

*Crime in Montana Annual Reports for 2002-2006 (MBCC)*

<b>Youth Risk Behavior Survey Data</b>	<b>Montana 2001</b>	<b>Montana 2003</b>	<b>Montana 2005</b>	<b>Montana 2007</b>	<b>U.S. 2005</b>
Q12. Percent of students who carried a weapon in the past 30 days	21.4	19.4	21.4	22.1	18.4
Q13. Percent of students who carried a gun in the past 30 days	9.0	8.7	9.0	7.8	6.5
Q14. Percent of students who carried a weapon on school property in the past 30 days	8.7	7.2	10.2	9.7	6.5
Q15. Percent of students who did not go to school in the past 30 days because they felt unsafe	5.5	3.4	4.2	4.2	5.4
Q16. Percent of students who had been threatened or injured with a weapon on school property in the past 12 months	8.5	7.1	8.0	7.0	8.0
Q18. Percent of students who were in a physical fight in the past 12 months	31.6	28.6	30.5	32.8	30.3
Q20. Percent of students who were in a physical fight on school property in the past 12 months	12.2	10.3	10.9	12.0	11.4
Q26. Percent of students who actually attempted suicide in the past 12 months	10.4	9.7	10.3	7.9	8.8
<b>Gun-Free Schools Data</b>	<b>2002-03</b>	<b>2003-04</b>	<b>2004-05</b>	<b>2005-06</b>	<b>2006-07</b>
Number of students expelled from school for bringing a gun to school (data since 1999-2000 is the number of <i>incidents</i> rather than the number of <i>expulsions</i> )	20	18	32	25	35
<b>Juvenile Crime Offenses Data</b>	<b>2002</b>	<b>2003</b>	<b>2004</b>	<b>2005</b>	<b>2006</b>
Number of weapon violations	57	77			

### ***Office of Public Instruction Efforts to Create Safe Schools***

The Montana Office of Public Instruction's proactive efforts to support safe schools and prevent violence among youth as well as dealing with issues resulting from a school tragedy include:

- providing methamphetamine education resources including a meth prevention website and the free "Tools for Schools" compact disc offering comprehensive lesson plans for grades 6 to 12
- implementing a bullying, intimidation and harassment policy
- implementing prevention programs as part of the 21<sup>st</sup> Century after-school programs
- providing schools with a biennial assessment tool that includes assessment of school policy on gun-free schools (Note: Montana law requires all school districts to have a gun-free school policy.)
- co-sponsoring the Montana Behavioral Initiative summer institutes which have included a variety of violence prevention strategies, including such things as "Crime Prevention through Environmental Design"
- distributing nearly \$1.5 million in federal Safe and Drug-Free Schools and Communities prevention funds annually to Montana schools
- collecting data on the violence-related behaviors of Montana youth, and sharing this data with schools and with state and community decision-makers
- increasing awareness of YRBS data and providing technical assistance in its use
- providing information to schools on effective violence prevention strategies and programs. Examples of this type of information are:
  - *Safe Schools, Safe Students: A Guide to Violence Prevention Programs*
  - *Early Warning, Timely Response: A Guide to Safe Schools*
  - *Youth Violence in Montana*
  - *Fostering Resiliency in Kids: Protective Factors in the Family, Schools and Community*
  - *For Our Children's Sake: A Call to Community Action Against Youth Violence*
  - *Crisis Management in Schools: A Resource Guide*
  - *Managing Death Issues in the School*
  - *Preventing Chaos in Times of Crisis*
- Developing a Safe Schools Web site on OPI's homepage. The Web site contains information on resources, meetings and conferences, school policy and safe school checklists, commercial products, and a link to other Web sites.
- developing a simple checklist for schools to use in performing a self-audit on the extent to which the school has established a safe, disciplined and drug-free school
- Making schools aware that they have available to them the resources from the National Safe Schools Resource Center (NSSRC) at the Northwest Regional Educational Laboratory in Portland, Oregon. The many resources at the NSSRC include Web-based resources on crisis management, assessment and identification of at-risk students, and a media tool kit.
- Electronic mailboxes have been established which allow for quick alert and response to individual or multiple schools through Internet mail service.